

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: DIRECTOR & EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

THE TENANT ON THE ROOF

3 Male (M + M + M) | Genre: Horror/Supernatural | Runtime: 6 - 9 Mins

OFFICIAL STORY LOGLINE: A rooftop at night becomes the site of a buried truth when a new tenant appears where he should not be, forcing a building owner and caretaker to confront a death they tried to erase from the record. As drizzle, flickering light, and a haunted register close in, the real horror is not a ghost but a memory that refuses to stay buried.
DIRECTOR'S DRAMATIC VISION & TONAL CONCEPT: • Visual tone: damp, claustrophobic, and uncanny, with a sickly sodium-yellow palette against deep night shadows. • The rooftop should feel alive: puddles, reflections, and moving shadows create the sense that the terrace is breathing and remembering. • Pacing starts tense and realistic, then tightens into a slow-burn supernatural confrontation with pauses that let guilt land. • Horror is psychological first, supernatural second; the reveal should feel like a moral haunting rather than a jump-scare. • Keep performances restrained and grounded so Ali's calmness becomes more unsettling than overt aggression. • Use the streetlight flicker, flashlight tremble, and rain escalation as emotional pressure valves that mirror the characters' denial collapsing.
CAST AT A GLANCE & CHARACTER ARCS: • character: Manoj age: 45 look: Building owner in an expensive kurta, irritated face, authoritative posture, keys always in hand. dramatic_arc: Begins dismissive and controlling, treating the rooftop disturbance as nuisance and drama; ends shaken and morally cornered as the hidden death becomes undeniable. • character: Sanjay age: 38 look: Caretaker in a faded vest, wary eyes, carrying a flashlight and the old building register. dramatic_arc: Starts as anxious and compliant, trying to deflect blame; gradually reveals fear and complicity, finally collapsing into guilt and self-protection. • character: Ali age: 24 look: Wet hair, plain T-shirt, barefoot, calm and unnervingly still, with a cold, steady gaze. dramatic_arc: Appears as the new tenant but functions as the keeper of memory; his calm confrontation turns the rooftop into a courtroom where the buried truth is forced into the open.
FESTIVAL & AUDIENCE TARGET: Ideal for Short Film Festivals, Indie Showcases, and YouTube Creator Channels. Focus on tight performances, sound design, and authentic Hinglish dialogue delivery.

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ART, WARDROBE & PROP MASTER

1. SET DESIGN & SPATIAL DEPTH PLAN:

Build a rooftop terrace with a practical wet-down surface, shallow puddles, and visible drainage edges so reflections can distort the space. Include a single sodium streetlight source, weak spill from nearby windows, one water tank with aged metal texture and scratch marks, and clotheslines that cast broken shadows across the floor. The terrace should feel cramped despite open sky: low parapet walls, a corner where footsteps first appear, and enough negative space for the characters to feel exposed. The old building register should be physically weathered, yellowed, and damp, with a torn page that can be inserted and revealed on camera. Keep the environment layered with rust, peeling paint, damp concrete, and streaks from rain runoff.

2. COSTUME & WARDROBE CONTINUITY:

- **Manoj:** Expensive kurta with a polished, owner-class look that contrasts with the wet rooftop. Keep it slightly disturbed by drizzle but still intact, signaling his attempt to maintain control. Continuity note: keys remain in hand until they drop near the end.
- **Sanjay:** Faded vest with a worn, practical caretaker feel. The vest should read as old, functional, and slightly damp from the drizzle. Continuity note: flashlight stays with him and should visibly tremble as fear rises; register is first in his possession before Manoj snatches it.
- **Ali:** Plain T-shirt, wet hair, barefoot, no accessories, no visible protection from the rain. His clothing should look simple and unremarkable, but the wetness and stillness make him feel uncanny. Continuity note: he remains barefoot throughout and should never appear rushed or defensive.

3. HERO PROPS MASTER CHECKLIST (PRACTICAL ON-SET ASSETS):

- **prop:** Keys bunch | **details:** Metal key ring with multiple keys that can be jangled, snatched, and dropped loudly onto wet floor.
- **prop:** Flashlight | **details:** Handheld beam with visible tremble; practical light should sweep Ali, the register, and the water tank.
- **prop:** Old building register | **details:** Wet, old, yellowed ledger with a torn page; must be readable for Room 14, Roof access, Midnight complaint, and Death on terrace.
- **prop:** Water tank | **details:** Aged metal tank with old scratch marks that resemble clawing or desperate scraping.
- **prop:** Clotheslines | **details:** Taut lines casting warped shadows across puddles and terrace floor.
- **prop:** Puddles | **details:** Reflective water patches that can hold distorted silhouettes and Ali's lingering reflection.

4. PRACTICAL SFX & MAKEUP (MUA):

Keep all makeup naturalistic and rain-reactive. Manoj should have a slightly sweaty, irritated sheen that catches the sodium light as his stress rises. Sanjay should look tired, wary, and increasingly pale as fear escalates; add subtle under-eye darkness and dampness on the face and vest. Ali should appear wet from drizzle with hair clinging to the forehead and neck, but without signs of panic or exertion. For the final reveal, emphasize the cold, drained reaction on Manoj and the ghostly stillness of Ali through lighting rather than heavy prosthetics. No overt gore is required; the horror comes from atmosphere, guilt, and the scratch marks on the tank.

ACTOR MASTERCLASS & HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ACTORS & CASTING DIRECTOR

STANISLAVSKI SUBTEXT & CHARACTER DRIVERS:

- **Manoj:** {'super_objective': 'To preserve authority and avoid accountability.', 'subtext': 'If I deny this hard enough, the past stays buried and I remain in control.'}
- **Sanjay:** {'super_objective': 'To survive the confrontation without becoming the sole scapegoat.', 'subtext': 'I know more than I want to admit, and every word could destroy me.'}
- **Ali:** {'super_objective': 'To force the truth back into the building's memory.', 'subtext': 'You cannot erase what happened just because you wrote over it.'}

CANONICAL HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES (CLIMACTIC SCENE):

MANOJ

((ghurte hue))

Teen raat se roof pe kadam ki awaz aa rahi hai. Aur tum bol rahe ho, “shayad hawa hogi”?

SANJAY

Hawa itni regular nahi hoti, sahib.

MANOJ

Matlab?

SANJAY

Matlab main khud dekh chuka hoon. Raat bhar room band. Subah bhi. Phir bhi roof pe... bare feet ki awaz.

ALI

Main yahin tha. Main gaya hi nahi.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: CINEMATOGRAPHY & SOUND DEPT

1. CINEMATOGRAPHY CONCEPT & LENS PALETTE:

Use a restrained, observational camera language that slowly becomes accusatory. Favor medium wides to establish the rooftop geometry, then push into tight close-ups as guilt surfaces. Lenses should feel intimate and slightly compressed in the confrontation, with selective use of longer focal lengths to isolate faces against the wet background. Camera movement should be minimal and deliberate: slow pushes, subtle handheld tremor during emotional spikes, and a final stillness that lets the puddle reflection land as the last unsettling image.

2. 3-TIER LIGHTING SCHEMATIC:

Tier 1: Establishment - single sodium streetlight as the dominant practical source, with weak window spill to define the rooftop edges and create a sickly yellow-green night mood.

Tier 2: Confrontation - increase contrast by letting flashlight beams carve faces and the register, while the streetlight flicker introduces instability and shadow movement.

Tier 3: Reveal and aftermath - deepen the blacks, let rain catch the light, and isolate Ali and the water tank with harder practical highlights so the scratch marks and reflection become the final visual proof.

3. SOUND DESIGN & FOLEY ATMOSPHERE:

Build a wet rooftop acoustic profile: light drizzle on concrete, occasional heavier rain hits, soft puddle ripples, distant building hush, and the metallic jangle of keys. The flashlight should have a faint practical click and beam hum if desired, but remain subtle. Footsteps must be distinct when heard, especially the bare feet sound that motivates the scene. Use streetlight electrical flicker, distant thunder, and a slight room-tone void around Ali to make him feel unnaturally present. The register pages should sound damp and brittle when flipped.

4. COLOR GRADING LUT & PALETTE:

Use a desaturated night palette with sodium yellow, dirty amber, muted green shadows, and cold gray-blue rain tones. Preserve the sickly warmth of the streetlight while keeping skin tones slightly drained and uneasy. Increase contrast in the final reveal so the scratch marks on the tank and the reflection in the puddle read clearly. The grade should feel humid, grimy, and memory-soaked rather than glossy.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: PRODUCER & LINE MANAGEMENT

TIME	ACTIVITY / SCENE BLOCK	KEY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED
08:00 - 09:30	Scout rooftop, mark practical light positions, and wet-down floor for reflection tests	Direction, Camera, Art, Grip
09:30 - 11:00	Dress terrace with water tank, clotheslines, register, and continuity props	Art, Props, Wardrobe
11:00 - 12:30	Prelight single sodium source, test flashlight beam, and set flicker cues	Camera, Gaffer, Electric
12:30 - 13:30	Makeup, wardrobe continuity, and rain/dampness checks on all actors	HMU, Wardrobe, Continuity
13:30 - 15:00	Rehearse blocking, register reveal, and key drop beats	Director, Actors, Camera
15:00 - 17:00	Shoot confrontation coverage and insert shots of register, tank scratches, and puddle reflection	Camera, Sound, Script Supervisor

LOCATION HACK & BUDGET SAVING TIPS:

Use one strong practical streetlight look and supplement with a single hidden LED or bounced source to mimic weak window spill. Wet the floor selectively only in frame to save water and cleanup time. Build the register page insert as a close-up prop rather than a full archive book. Use real drizzle or fine spray only for key moments to control continuity and sound. Keep the rooftop dressing minimal but textured: one tank, one clothesline, one parapet corner, and puddles can carry the entire mood. Let performance and sound do the heavy lifting instead of expensive VFX or makeup effects.

• **Mandatory Licensing:** Completely free for student/commercial production with on-screen credit: 'Story & Screenplay by Story Dil Se (storydilse.in)'.

